

THIS SPACE IS RESERVED FOR NOTICES OF THE

Park Methodist Episcopal Church

BROAD AND PARK ST., BLOOMFIELD, N. J.

Minister:

REV. JOHN OGDEN WINNER, M. A.

20 PARK STREET.

The pastor will preach at both the morning and evening service.

The Sunday-school meets in the Parish House at 12.10.

The First Banquet of the Men's Club will be held in the Parish House on Thursday evening, February 1. Ex-Governor Franklin Fort and Rev. Dr. Giles of Orange are among the speakers expected. Tickets are \$1.00, and may be bought up to date of January 27. See notice next Saturday.

CLOSE OF TWENTY YEARS.

Anniversary Sermon Preached by the Rev. E. A. White in Commemoration of the Close of the Twentieth Year of His Rectorship in Christ Episcopal Church.

On Sunday, January 14, the Rev. Edwin A. White completed his twentieth year as rector of Christ Episcopal Church and preached an anniversary sermon in commemoration of that event, which follows:

Twenty years in the life of a parish is a long stretch. Christ Church parish is a little more than fifty years old. Of that period twenty years constitutes a large fraction, about two-fifths. In the life of a man twenty years is even a larger proportion. If we deduct the time passed in childhood, youth and in years of education, you have left out of the three score years and ten allotted to man not much over forty-five years. Forty-five years for work. Of that period twenty years makes nearly one-half. So long, my friends, have I been permitted to work among you, giving the best of my life to service in this place.

It may be interesting to note in a general way what we have accomplished during these twenty years. We, I say, for if any success has come, if any mark has been made upon the community, if any noteworthy influence has been exerted, it has been because rector and people, clergy and laity, have pulled together. In the consideration of the success that we have attained as a parish, I feel that anything like boasting ought to be excluded. There is nothing to boast of. I recall an incident in the life of the late Bishop Griswold. He looked in once at a revival meeting, where there was a great deal of excitement, and where ushers were passing up and down the aisles, laying their hands here and there on strangers, and speaking to them a word of exhortation. The Bishop was in the gallery, standing and quietly attending to what was going on. One of the ushers laid his hand upon his shoulder and said: "Stranger, have you got religion?" The Bishop turned and said in a quiet voice: "None to boast of, my friend." Something of this we ought to feel as we look back over these twenty years.

Of the present communicant membership of 700, all but 31 have been received during these twenty years. There have been 341 baptisms, 426 confirmations, 282 persons joined in holy matrimony, and 267 laid to rest with the Church's burial office. Nearly \$300,000 has been raised for all purposes. I believe this to be a creditable record which I am willing to submit to the brotherhood, and the commend-

able part of it is, that it is due to your love and loyalty and unfailing enterprise.

Few parishes have enjoyed greater material prosperity than Christ Church during these twenty years. Twenty years ago we were one of the weakest parishes in the diocese, to-day we are one of the strongest. Twenty years ago we numbered scarcely one hundred communicants, to-day we number seven hundred. Twenty years ago we had a little wooden church on a side street, to-day we have a beautiful stone church on one of the most prominent corners in the community. Twenty years ago our annual income amounted to about twenty-five hundred dollars, to-day it amounts to about one-half as many thousands. Twenty years ago we had a divided parish rent with internal dissensions, to-day we have a united and harmonious parish, none more so in all the land.

During these years we have built a stone church that is admitted to be one of the most beautiful suburban churches anywhere to be found, and best of all, it is fully paid for. We have also built a parish house, a beautiful and commodious rectory, and a parochial chapel during this period. The money is also in hand to build a new choir room.

Many changes have occurred during these twenty years. Only 31 communicants are now members of the parish who were members twenty years ago. Of the original vestry that gave the call to the present rector only one is now a member of the vestry, the present senior warden. God has indeed blessed us as a parish during these twenty years; may He continue to bless us in the years to come. As I look back to-day over the past twenty years, there are many things which lead me especially to realize and rejoice in God's mindfulness of us here in Christ Church parish. And the first thing that comes to my mind is that through God's mercy we have truly kept "the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace."

Surely here we have much to be thankful for. While during the first three years of this period there were storms and clouds—violent storms and dark clouds—due to the fact that the parish was in a transition stage, a stage that was nothing less than death of the old parish and the birth of the new one, yet the storm soon ceased, the clouds drifted away, the sky became clear and serene, and during all these remaining years we have lived and labored together in splendid accord and unbroken fellowship of love. I am not speaking of mere surface sociability, with its accompaniment of smile and handshake. I do not mean simply

the atmosphere which is created at pleasant gatherings to promote acquaintance or even cement friendship. These to be sure have their place.

Yes, indeed. Some of us look back to very delightful times of reunion and good fellowship which brought us together as a parish and helped to keep us in enjoyable friendly touch with one another. And I honestly believe that these occasions and opportunities have largely helped to give Christ Church its good name in this community, and not only in our own immediate community, but throughout the whole diocese, for unity, harmony, sociability, and a strong and vigorous churchmanship that is able and willing to do things, and what is more, do them right. But I would go deeper than all this when I speak of the "unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." I believe that we are living in real Christian union because we believe in the things that Christianity stands for, united by a common desire to build up the Christian church in this community. "The unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." We know what that means, for we have been experiencing it these many years.

Another thing that I desire to mention is the spirit of liberality that has become one of the distinctive characteristics of Christ Church liberality, I mean, as regards giving. I hope that our theology has been of the liberal type also. But I am now speaking of liberality in giving. This has become an increasingly distinct note of our parish during the past few years. And when I say increasingly so, I mean particularly now, that this spirit has been becoming more and more general in the parish year by year. There are not many parishes in the land the size of this parish that cannot count among its members a few who can give large amounts when necessary. Not so with this parish. While it has many, who give generously according to their means, it never has had men who could give their thousands. Christ Church has been built and supported and paid for, not by the larger gifts, of the few, but by the smaller gifts of the many.

The spirit of giving in Christ Church, I believe, of a distinctly higher type than it was twenty years ago. The majority of men and women in this parish have been catching the spirit of Christian giving and coming to the front, saying in effect, and with practical emphasis, "The cause of religion is dear to us; this is our Church, its interests concern us, its work has claims upon our hearty sympathy and best support. We owe to its service and teachings, to its care and solace and inspirations all that makes life best worth living. And we hold it as our bounden duty, our sacred privilege, to give its support, to aid according to our honest ability in the doing of its more immediate parish work, and to help forward those great philanthropic causes and activities to the advancement of which it stands committed."

I admit, with frankness, that it has been one decided aim of my ministry to bring this result to pass. And I thank God that this is, more truly than ever before, the spirit of Christ Church on this twentieth anniversary Sunday. Permit a momentary digression of thought from the past to the future. Excellent as the standard is to which we have already attained, there are two points in the matter of giving wherein I would that we might improve. I would that more of us might adopt a precise, specific method of systematic giving. Let it be weekly, monthly, quarterly or at any time you please, but adopt some periodical system of laying by a certain proportion of your income for charitable and religious objects. Those who have adopted this method will join with one consent to recommend it as the true way to regulate this matter of Christian giving. It causes the giver to realize that he is God's trustee; it enlists his conscience in the disposal of his gifts; it saves him from delusion and self-deception, for many a man thinks that he is giving far more than he is, because he does not keep an exact account of his gifts.

The other point is the matter of our Easter offerings, wherein we fail to quite come up to our standard. Although I have tried to impress upon you in season and out of season that our Easter offerings should be in every sense of the word a thank-offering to Almighty God for the blessed hope that He has given us in the resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ, I fear that many of us have not yet fully grasped it. It is one of my hopes for the future that the Christian men and women of this parish may soon realize it, and that our offerings on each succeeding Easter Day may be more and more commensurate with the thankfulness that is ours for the hope which the day brings to us.

To return to the review of the past. The Sunday-school work of the parish has maintained a high level. More work and more efficient work could be done if we had more room. To-day the Sunday-school fills the parish house and overflows into the church. A problem confronts us here which demands a speedy solution. During all these years the Sunday-school has been the nursery of the church. A large proportion of those who have been presented for confirmation have

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been trained in our Sunday-school. Without the stimulation of the Sunday-school work, the parish would have suffered. Without the candidates furnished by the school, our annual harvest would have been very much smaller than it has been. I would urge upon you to begrudge no provision for the education of our little ones in the Christian faith. Depend upon it that in so doing you will be richly rewarded.

You know what I think of the womanhood of this church, and how through their various organizations they have been a bulwark to this parish in its time of need. Again and again in the days when it was weak and feeble, they assumed the payment of some pressing debt and satisfied the claims of some insistent creditor. It was their aid that enabled the vestry many times to solve the financial problems that confronted them. Were there nothing else in the record of the past twenty years save their peerless labors, they would give distinction to this parish. In one respect this parish possesses a unique distinction, for not only do the women of the parish work as in other parishes, but the men work as well.

We have an organization of men universally admitted to be the most efficient organization of its kind in any parish in the diocese, composed of nearly one hundred active, energetic, faithful men. The present prosperity of this parish is due in great measure, far more perhaps than we realize, to this splendid body of men, which was organized sixteen years ago by a devoted layman, has continued to grow in numbers and efficiency year by year, until its good works have become a matter of good report far beyond the confines of our parish. Never once has the rector called upon this body of men for assistance in vain. Whatever the work asked of them, from the giving of a parish reception to the clearing off of the mortgage indebtedness of the church, they have responded willingly and heartily, and always carried it to a successful issue. Without their help, the record of the past twenty years would have been a far different one from what it is. No parish could help being prosperous, whoever the rector, with such a magnificent body of men to do its needed work.

But the full history of these twenty years can never be fully written out. The usefulness of a church cannot be expressed by any figures or statistics. If the church has been what it ought to be, and done what it ought to do, then it has found its way into the lives of the people who have worshipped in its courts and into the character of the community in which it stands. The Word here has been taught and preached. The work of a Christian church has been diligently carried on. It is God only that can and does give the increase. Our prayer and our hope is that it has not been done in vain.

I cannot close this review of twenty years without expressing my deepest gratitude to Almighty God for the excellent health preserved through all these years whereby He has enabled me to perform the duties of my office without the omission of a single service or absence therefrom on account of illness for twenty years. On the occasion of my tenth anniversary as rector I stated that our work for the next ten years must be the building of a rectory, and the payment of the mortgage on the church. By God's help, and through your kindness and generosity, these things have been accomplished. Our constructive work is not yet done. If we are to do the work that this church ought to do and must do in this community, then must we do these three things in the very near future: We must either enlarge the present parish house or build a new one, we must enlarge the church, and we must enlarge the organ. These things are necessary and they will be done.

So from the past we turn to the future, and pray with all our hearts that Christ Church may continue a work such as she ought to do. May she stand perpetual. May her work ever go on. And may she be in years to come, as she has in the years that have passed, a centre of influence and power, a witness for God and for truth, a house of God and a gate of heaven, for generations after generations, that shall find their way into her courts, and bring their offerings of prayer and praise to the Lord of Hosts.

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